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O’Gorman Named 2015 Dougan Award Honoree

April 16, 2015

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University Professor of English Kathleen O’Gorman has been named the recipient of the fifth James D. Dougan Award for Contributions to Faculty Governance.

The award was created by the Illinois Wesleyan chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), in honor of Dougan, a professor of psychology, who passed away in October 2010. The award is presented annually to a faculty member who demonstrates extraordinary active engagement in improving and shaping the University through advocating for faculty interests, for academic freedom, or in finding cooperative solutions to campus challenges.

O’Gorman has served on and chaired the Promotion and Tenure Committee a number of times, worked as a mentor for new faculty for 18 consecutive years, offered workshops to faculty in her areas of expertise, and served as IWU AAUP Chapter President, among other activities. O’Gorman said she considers her most important contribution to faculty governance was founding the Health Care Advocacy Committee 20 years ago.



Kathleen O’Gorman

“My argument for the creation of the committee came out of my solitude in navigating health care nightmares at a time of great personal distress,” said O’Gorman. “I hoped that having a collective sense of issues people were dealing with and having a communal way of addressing them would help, and that sense of common cause seemed especially important. It has continued to be important, even all these years later.”

In announcing the award, Rebecca Roesner, president of Illinois Wesleyan’s AAUP chapter, said O’Gorman contributes a “perhaps less glamorous and often overlooked aspect of governance.” Year and year, on the first Monday of the month during the academic year, O’Gorman “comes prepared to faculty meetings and when necessary voices concerns that have the faculty’s best interests in mind.”

A faculty member since 1986, O’Gorman’s teaching and interests include 20th and 21st century British and Irish literature, experimental fiction, 20th and 21st century Latin American fiction, and contemporary women writers. She said her guiding principle during her work in faculty governance can be summed up by one of her favorite writers, Samuel Beckett: “[I]t is all very fine to keep silence, but one has also to consider the kind of silence one keeps.”

“Faculty governance gives us a voice. While I have the deepest respect for silence, I do think we need to be careful of the kind of silence we keep, and I try to use the voice we have where it might do some good,” said O’Gorman.

By Danielle Kamp '15